1: Handy E-5 (1920-1921)1923 OX6 Marquesas OX6

tooing, a master tattooer taught his son the art if he showed the ability and desired to follow the profession; but he likewise taught others who came to him and served an apprenticeship as assistants in the tattooing operations. An old woman still living on the island of Fata Hiva, who is today recognized as a *tuhuna ha'akekai*, acquired her knowledge of legends and chants from her mother who built a special, consecrated house (*oho au*) in which to teach her daughter. This woman's mother had similarly become a *tuhuna ha'akekai* by being taught by her mother. The woman now living also built an *oho au* for the purpose of teaching her daughter but the girl was too stupid and would not learn. In other words, this is an example of direct family inheritance of this type of learning in the female line. I know of a male *tuhuna* that passed on his learning to his granddaughter, and of still another who passed it on to a niece and her husband. The only living tattooing artist (*tuhuna patu tiki*) now in the Marquesas, a very old man, whose designs are still to be seen on a number of natives, learned his art by becoming apprenticed to a man to whom he was related. The old man himself told me, however, that the art of tattooing was most commonly inherited in the male line from father to son, but that it could also be practiced by any man who had the talent to learn the designs by observation and to become proficient as an apprentice, whose duty it was to assist the tattooing master in the operation. When the master tattooer was convinced that such an apprentice had demonstrated his proficiency, the apprentice himself was accepted as a *tuhuna*. That is, I say, there was a tendency toward direct inheritance but no fixed rule regarding it and no restriction of knowledge to particular families.

TUHUNA AS A CLASS

Food, cloth, ornaments, and the like, were given to *tuhuna* as payment for the practice of their profession and for their labor. The wealth thus acquired by the *tuhuna* and the prestige that their knowledge and skill gave them, brought it about that they constituted virtually a class by themselves. As a class they had very definite ceremonial and political functions. In the rites of major importance the *tuhuna* furnished from their ranks the choruses of old men who intoned the sacred chants. As the wise old men of the tribe the *tuhuna* served a very definite function in tribal matters as political advisors. It has been pointed out in the discussion of the social order that there were especial *tuhuna* whose whole function consisted in being executives of the chief. *Tuhuna* did not go to war, but were men who had served as warriors in their younger days. The *tuhuna* who ranked above all others and who served the most important tribal function was the *tuhuna o'ono*, master chanter, tribal bard, or cere-

6: Lisiansky T-5 (1803-1806) 1814 OX6 Marquesas OX6

161 My endeavours to ascertain with accuracy the population of the island were fruitless: from comparing, however, Roberts's account with what I could observe myself, I judged that the south side of it contained about four thousand inhabitants. 1804. May.

142 The natives are a handsome and well-made people; the men especially, who are tall and strong-limbed. The commonalty are of a dark complexion, with straight black hair. The nobility are much fairer.

304 Tatooing is so much in fashion here, that there is not an individual without some marks of it. Many were covered all over with different figures, some of which displayed much taste. The king, however, surpassed all his subjects in this kind of embellishment. His body was so completely figured, that scarcely the smallest spot of the natural colour of his skin could be perceived. To be thus perfectly tatooed, is a business of great [465] expense; the masters of the art expecting to be paid handsomely for their work. The practice of tatooing appeared to me very ridiculous at first; but when accustomed to it, those who had the most figures I thought the most comely. It is astonishing that women, who are in all countries so fond of beautifying their persons, do not tatoo themselves here; except with a few lines on the lips, round the perforation in the ears, and on the hands.

291 There is hardly any clothing worn by these people. The men 304 have sometimes a sort of towel round the waist, but in general they go quite naked. Mr. Langsdorff has said, that circumcision is universal among them. So far from this being the case,

8: Handy T-5 (1920-1921) 1922 OX6 Marquesas OX6

Tattooing in the Marquesas

By Willowdean Chatterson Handy

INTRODUCTION

Drawings and photographs of tattooing patterns on the bodies of natives were made by the author during a residence in the Marquesas Islands in 1921. As tattooing is now forbidden by the laws of the country and the art is consequently dying out, this collection of the last specimens of tattooing patterns which exist today in the Marquesas has seemed to demand a complementary collection of information regarding the practice of the art, to the end that the beautiful motives might at least be partly accounted for and might some day take their merited place in the history of art. The data have been drawn from natives who have been decorated, from one old *tuhuna*, or artist, who has practised tattooing, and from literary sources, thus piecing together a fairly accurate picture of the practice. Discussion of the design itself, of which the natives know nothing today beyond the nomenclature, is undertaken in a spirit of appreciation and with the hope that the suggestions offered regarding the evolution and significance of this form of decoration may uncover other possibilities and lead to a more conclusive interpretation of the art.

THE PRACTICE OF THE ART

It would appear that this form of body decoration was not confined to certain ranks or classes in the Marquesas, though what might be called a property qualification limited somewhat the complete covering and finer work to the wealthy who could afford to employ the best artists and stand the attendant expense of feeding them and their assistants as well as the large band of *ka'ioi* who erected the special house for the occasion. A father prepared long in advance for the payment for tattooing of his first-born, raising pigs, and planting *ute*, paper mulberry *(Broussonetia papyrifera)*, for the making of tapa as gifts for both the *ka'ioi* and the *tuhuna*. Payment also took the form of ornaments, war clubs, and more recently, guns. Langsdorff says that they paid for their decorations according to the greater or less quantity of them, and to the trouble the figures required; that during the thirty or forty years when the body was gone over again and again with the tattooing bones until the skin was completely covered, the cost became considerable; and that such all-over decoration necessarily indicated a person of great wealth (10 p. 120)[1]. It follows

[1] Throughout this paper the numbers in parentheses refer to the bibliography on page 26.

8: Handy T-5 (1920-1921)1922 OX6 Marquesas OX6

304 naturally that it also appeared only upon people of advanced years (6, p. 556 130; 13, p. 102-103), a circumstance which undoubtedly led to Captain 465 Chanal's conclusion that the marks had no relation to anything but age (11, p. 111).

304 While the *tuhuna* was paid generously for work on an *opou*, the eldest 556 son of a wealthy man, no payment was asked of the *ka'ioi*, a more or 561 less unorganized group of younger sons and daughters, who took such part in the preparations as raiding for food and building the special house, and who slipped in to have designs punctured upon them gratis when the *opou* was resting or recuperating from the effects of the operation. It is perhaps these *ka'ioi* to whom Melville (12, p. 49) refers in speaking of the common fellows who were practiced on. Langsdorff was apparently unaware of this custom, for he says that those who could not afford tattooing went without:

> The poorer islanders who have not a superabundance of hogs to dispose of in luxuries, but live chiefly themselves upon breadfruit, are operated upon by novices in the art, who take them at a very low price as subjects for practice. The lowest class of all, the fishermen principally, are often not able to afford even the pay required by a novice, and are therefore not tattooed at all. (10, p. 120.)

With the lower classes noticeably less tattooed than the higher, the conclusion was often drawn by early visitors that this form of decoration pointed out noble or distinguished persons (8, p. 155 and 13, p. 84). Berchon, writing in 1859, avows that all classes were tattooed at that time, but that formerly it was a sign of nobility and distinction. From what is to be gathered today from living informants, this is a misconception, in the main, based on the fact that wealth was in the hands of chiefs and distinguished men.

304 Melville (13, p. 102) at one time assigns tattooing to the warrior 714 class, but present information states that the untattooed as well as the 622 tattooed went to war. That warriors, as well as other groups, wore special designs as badges is stated by modern informants as true in a few instances, and is frequently suggested by the early voyagers to the Marquesas. Spirals over the eyes (Pl. v, 7) are today described as belonging to all warriors in ancient times, while spirals called *kokoata* on cheeks and hips indicated chiefs, as do the tiny pinlike marks (Pl. XXXVIII, *G. d)* to be seen today on the inside of the left ankle. After a battle these marks—according to the informants—were sought for by the priest of a victorious army on the ankles of the slain to determine whether a chief had been killed and a great battle fought. Beyond these distinguishing marks, living informants make no mention of the badges described